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EIGHT HOUR SERIES No. 1.

(Third Edition)

THE EIGHT HOUR PRIMER.

The Fact, Theory and the Argument.

By GEO. E. McNEILL,

Deputy of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor from 1869
to 1873, and author of

"THE LABOR MOVEMENT, THE PROBLEM OF TO-DAY."

"If you work by the piece
Or work by the day,
Reducing the hours
Increases the pay."

QUESTIONS

To the Unemployed, the Employed, the Employer, the Cap-
italist, the Clergyman, and the Observer.

WASHINGTON.

1907



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THE FACT.

QUESTIONS TO THE UNEMPLOYED.

Questioner—"What do you want?"

Answer—"Work."

Questioner—"What do you want work for?"

Answer—"So I may live."

Questioner—"You are living now, what more do you want?"

Answer—"I want to have a good deal better living. Sometimes I am hungry and I want food; I am getting ragged, and I want better clothes; I sometimes have to sleep out-doors, and I want a regular and comfortable place to sleep; I am treated like a dog; I want to be treated like a man; I hate the present, and I dread the future; I shall soon be desperate and become a criminal, or careless and become a hardened tramp."

Questioner—"Why don't you work?"

Answer—"I can't get work at any price."

Questioner—"Why can't you get work?"

Answer—"Because no one will employ me."

Questioner—"Why don't you employ yourself?"

Answer—"Oh, don't talk nonsense to a hungry man."

Questioner—"How comes it that you are out of work?"

Answer—"I learned a trade and was doing fairly well; soon machinery was introduced, and boys and girls could do the work with the machine; I was discharged. I tried to find some employment where I could improve my condition, and have a fair chance for promotion; as there was nothing for me to do in the town where I then lived, I commenced to look elsewhere. Winter came on, men were being discharged, my money was soon gone, I had to pawn my good clothes and

get cheaper, so I have gone from bad to worse, until I would now do anything; exposure and want have weakened me and I am called a tramp."

Questioner—"Did you belong to a trade-union?"

Answer—"No, I never meddled with such things."

Questioner—"Cannot you find work at some place where the men are on a strike?"

Answer—"If you know of such a place I will go if I can get there, although it's a mean kind of business and can't last long."

Questioner—"Did you ever try it?"

Answer—"Yes, there was a strike in a machine shop. I saw the notice 'men wanted,' and although I never worked in a machine shop, I was hired and told that I should have what I earned. The men employed, except a few of the old hands that remained, were as ignorant of the work as I was; they were a low down lot, and the machinists at work would have nothing to do with us; the foreman told us that he did not expect us to do much, except to pretend to work, and this pleased the crowd. I tried the best I knew and was anxious to remain, but as I had no one to show me, soon after the strike ended we were discharged. I had my board and lodging and five dollars in money; I bought a hat, boots and shirt so as to look respectable, and here I am tramping again, ready for anything."

(NOTE TO READER.)

A married man with a wife and child, having lost his employment in New Jersey, sought work in Connecticut, was arrested as a tramp because he was hungry and asked for bread, and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment in the jail; he escaped and returned on foot to his family in New Jersey, and was rearrested for escaping, and was returned to jail in Connecticut; his wife, with a child in her arms, begged in vain that her husband might remain with his family.

Questioner (To the Reader)—"How do you like it?"

Quotation from a book called the "Holy Scriptures:" "What father is there among you, who if his child ask him for bread would give him a stone?"

THE FACT—(Continued).

Questioner (To the Employed)—"What do you want?"

Answer—"More wages."

Questioner—"The unemployed asks merely for work at any price, and here you who have work are not satisfied, but ask for more wages; why do you want more wages?"

Answer—"Because I can not live as a civilized man ought to live."

Questioner—"How do you think a civilized man ought to live?"

Answer—"I have a wife and three children; the oldest is ten and the youngest three years of age; I ought to have at least five rooms to live in, comfortably furnished, and in a healthy, respectable location. Rent in such a location, easy of access to my work, so that I

could go home to my dinner, would cost me \$25 per month; if I went out four or five miles, I would have to pay car fare, and buy my dinner or eat a cold lunch; I would have to buy my supplies out of town, where they cost more than in the city; I should have less time with my family, and God knows I have but little time with them now. If I attended any meetings or amusements that would be extra car fare to pay; my wife and children are so poorly clad that I am almost ashamed of them. I want to give the children a decent education; I want to carry some insurance, so that in case of sickness or death my family may receive some relief. It costs me all I can earn now when I work fifty-two weeks in the year, and I have not averaged forty-six weeks for the past five years. I have had sickness in the family, which the doctor says is due to the want of good air, sunlight and a sufficient variety of food; I have been sick three weeks myself and run in debt; my wages have been cut down. I must have more wages or become a dead beat, and move to escape rent and other debts."

Questioner—"Do the employed generally want more wages?"

Answer—"I never saw a man worthy of the name that did not want more. Even the rich, who live in luxury, counting their money by hundreds of thousands of dollars and even millions, seem to think it right that they should want more, but when a hard-working man wants to live a little better and see his family have a few of the comforts of civilization, they seem to think he is an enemy of the human race."

Questioner—"How do you expect to get more wages?"

Answer—"I don't know. Good men differ; some say it's the land, some say it's the system of money, some say it's the great amount of machinery that keeps down wages from the natural increase, some hold that wages can be advanced by organization, by strikes, and some claim that the best way is by the reduction of the hours of labor. It looks to me that if the hours of labor were reduced, the unemployed could find work and we could all get better wages, but all I know is that I want more and must have it. I am becoming desperate. I may be discharged any day and be forced to tramp."

Questioner—"Does it not seem strange to you that the unemployed and the employed are in the same boat, and perhaps I should say in the same swim, for you both seem to be in deep rough water?"

Answer—"Yes, and if I strike, the tramp may take my place and I his."

Questioner—"Does it not seem best to find work for these unemployed first?"

Answer—"Yes, if it could be done, but Castle Garden is crowded with men seeking employment; they come over by hundreds of thousands, and as they live cheaper they can work cheaper. Then machinery is discharging skilled mechanics, and women, boys and girls are doing the work that men used to do."

Questioner—"Stand aside a few moments and let us question this employer, perhaps he can help us find a way out of the difficulty."

THE FACT—(Continued).

Questioner (To the Employer)—“What do you want?”

Answer—“More profit.”

Questioner—“The unemployed want work, and the employed want more wages, and you want more profit. What do you want of more profit?”

Answer—“I want to live in a better house; have a carriage of my own, a coachman and footman, and enter more into society; take my family to Europe, and in fact amass more wealth. A man worth but a hundred thousand dollars is a poor man now, especially if his money is invested in manufacturing; there is so much competition that I am forced to work like a dog to hold my trade. You have no idea of the strain upon a man situated as I am; the competition is terrible. I must have more profit, or in case of an industrial or financial crisis, I must go to the wall; then my hands will be discharged, and I will be brought down to their level; that is, unless I can cheat my creditors, which I do not want to do.”

Questioner—“How do you propose to get more profit?”

Answer—“There is but one of two ways,—reduce the wages of my employes or form a syndicate or trust company and thus secure a monopoly and control prices.”

Questioner—“Which do you think is the better way?”

Answer—“A reduction of wages, or an increase in their hours of labor at the same wages would be the best for all. Our workingmen have too high notions, they earn more than I did when I worked for wages.”

Questioner—“Was there as much manufacturing and as much enterprise, and did the employers then have carriages and go to Europe, as they do now?”

Answer—“No, things have changed, there is a larger population and men get better pay for their work; we employers have to live in better style than they did then; our wives require society; our children must be better provided for.”

Questioner—“You said a moment ago that competition was terrible; don't you believe in competition?”

Answer—“I don't like a competition that forces down profits; I am sometimes forced to make a contract in which there is no profit, and I do this simply to hold my customers.”

Questioner—“Is there not a high tariff to protect you against the cheap labor of Europe?”

Answer—“Yes, but that doesn't prevent the mammoth corporations from practically forcing me out of the business.”

Questioner—“If wages were reduced in this country to the European level, would that help you to more profit?”

Answer—“Well, I don't like to say that labor should be as cheap here as in Europe, but I don't see how we are to get along unless there is a considerable reduction; the fact is, something must be done to

increase profit, or else men will not invest their money in manufacturing. I shall have to have more profit or fail, or else sell out before the crash comes, and take my money and go to some country where things are cheap and live on what I have saved."

Questioner—"Is it not true that when wages are highest you have the best market; and that a low wages market is a poor market?"

Answer—"Yes, that's what puzzles me, how we are going to have low wages and find a quick and profitable market for our goods."

Questioner—"Your case seems desperate, but I must ask you to step aside and see what this capitalist has to say. He has his millions."

THE FACT—(Continued).

Questioner (To the Capitalist)—"What do you want?"

Answer—"I want to be let alone, and what is more I don't propose to be interfered with, either by trade-unions, questioners, students of the industrial question, philanthropists, clergymen, legislatures or city councils; I have made my money legally. I control telegraphs, telephones, means of transportation, mines, food-supplies, fuel, and, in fact, land, water, and about everything on the planet, including Congress, legislatures, and courts of law. As the people did not know enough to control them for themselves, a few of us have become possessors; but, to be polite to you, I want the best of everything there is; everything that art, science, and labor can produce, and that education and travel can give, and I propose to have all I can get, and if there is any attempt at interference, it will be the worse for those who interfere. This may seem hard to you, but it is just and right; I believe in the survival of the fittest. We have proved our fitness by the mastery of all these forces. We are kings; if not by divine right, by the royal right of success. A people who don't know enough to hold what they produce in time of peace and protect it in time of war, then they don't know enough to regain what they have lost, or to hold it if they should get possession. If it were all redistributed to-day, men such as I am would have it all again in a short time. Excuse me; I have a meeting with some friends, to consider whether it is best for our interests to have a panic or prosperity." (Exit Capitalist.)

Questioner (To the Reader)—"How do you like it?"

THE FACT—(Continued).

Questioner (To the Clergyman)—"What do you want?"

Answer—"I want to save souls."

Questioner—"How do you propose to do it?"

Answer—"By preaching the gospel."

Questioner—"What is that gospel?"

Answer—"I can't stop to preach a sermon; you know what the gospel is, I suppose."

Questioner—"I understand it to be 'Love the Lord, thy God, with

all thy might, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.' Do your parishioners practice that gospel ? ”

Answer—“ They do the best they can. I could wish that others would do as well. The trouble is that such as you bring discontent to the masses of men, and array them against the church ; we are told that the poor are always with us, and we preach charity ; establish missions, where they can hear the gospel preached, and make donations to charitable institutions.”

Questioner—“ Does the law of brotherhood taught by Christ enter into the relation between men, as between the employer and the employed ; the buyer and the seller ; the borrower and the lender ? ”

Answer—“ My dear sir, you must excuse me ; there is no doubt that something is wrong, and ‘ we clergymen recognize the difficulty ; we are not independent men ; some few receive large salaries, but many have as hard a struggle to live as the better paid mechanics ; for my part, it costs me all I receive to pay my way, and if I should undertake to defend the laborer I should lose my place, and have to take a smaller salary somewhere else.’ Excuse me, but I am making arrangements for a trip to Europe, to recuperate my energies. ‘ The social demands upon a city clergyman are extremely exacting.’ Good day, sir.” (Exit Clergyman.)

NOTE.—It is fair to say that there are now many clergymen who actively advocate eight hours, but the words here given are almost verbatim in the language of a clergyman in response to questions by the author.

Questioner (To the Reader)—“ How does this man compare with Christ—or even the Apostles ? ”

THE FACT—(Continued).

Questioner—“ Here comes a man of large experience, keen observation, and familiar with history. Let us ask him a few questions.”

Questioner (To the Man of Experience)—“ I am attempting to find the source of the great discontent that prevails, and to find the remedy. What do the people want ? ”

Observer (smiling)—“ They want more.”

Questioner—“ More of what ? ”

Answer—“ More of the quality and quantity of what they now have ; more of a better quality. They want what they see or know others to have and enjoy ; they want what they think they want, and in many cases people want what others want, having little conception of its use, or capability of its enjoyment.”

In many country stores printed notices are displayed containing these words : “ *If You Don't See What You Want, Ask for It.* ” Under our present civilization in productive centers, there is hardly a necessity that need go unsupplied, and yet the commonest wants of the greatest number of men and women and children are not satisfied, however urgent their plea ; if they ask for more wages, they are answered that the profit of the business will not warrant any increase ;

and if they ask for a reduction of the number of the working hours they are given the same answer.

The signs read : " If you don't see what you want, ask for it," but even when you see what you want, you can't get it by asking ; it is not always safe to ask for what you want and what you see ; the sign is a text and a sermon ; it evidences the fact that the wants of the people have wonderfully multiplied ; that as a rule a man will want an article before he will ask for it, and when he does want anything near or remote, present to his sight or hidden from view, he will ask for it.

A country storekeeper will ask : " What do you want ?" and if you will make known your want and can pay him his price for it, the transaction is soon completed.

The storekeeper does not sneeringly say : " You are always wanting something," as the opponents of the labor movement do, for in his daily transactions he understands that his employment and means of existence depend wholly upon the constant, varied and increasing wants of his customers.

If a green-horn should go staring into the store, not knowing what he wanted, the proprietor or salesman would try to sell him something ; that is, they would try to convince him that he did want some particular thing, and failing with one attempt would, if no other customer demanded their time, " try, try again," and if he had money to buy with, they would probably succeed, because he would either be reminded of something he did want, or be convinced that he did want something, but if a man attempted to obtain any goods simply by the asking, and made no proffer of payment, he would not only not succeed, but would be considered a fool.

There are those who take what they want without asking or without returning any equivalent, but they are thieves.

The country store is a miniature of the world ; it is the original of the great combination enterprises, such as Wanamaker's, of Philadelphia ; Macy's, in New York, and many others in large cities.

If you want to know what you want and how to get it, let the unalterable truth be our teacher ; truth is the storekeeper, because greater riches than the world knows are in her keeping.

" WHAT DO YOU WANT ?"

Let us ask this question of the different races of men, and from their answers we will find that the wants of a people show their condition.

The poor black man in the interior of Africa would be satisfied with a breech-clout, a weapon and some glistening beads.

The Chinaman, in China, wants coarse cloth for clothing, wants a little more dog, cat, or rat meat and some rice, anything that will keep him from the famine that is epidemic and almost continuous.

Moving westward through the semi-civilized countries to Germany, we find that the men who are congregated in the cities and towns, in addition to their larger physical wants of bread, beer and meat, want comfortable clothing and shelter ; they read, talk, think, love

music and aspire for a larger liberty. These added wants increase the cost of their living, and show that we have reached what is called civilization. In France and the islands of Great Britain, all of these wants are felt to a higher degree, but it is not until we reach this Republic that we find so large a number of wage-workers enjoying so many comforts and demanding more as a necessity of their larger opportunities as free citizens.

The question which we have so often repeated is answered according to what you have; *those who have the least want the least, those who have more want more; in this fact is the hope of the labor movement.*

If you have patiently thought out this much, you are prepared to consider the next question.

THE THEORY.

How can I get what I want?

There are so many methods presented in answer to this question, that many working people, as well as many students of the labor problem, become confused.

I would have you answer the question yourself in your own language, cautioning you against prejudice to any theory, but urging you to carefully examine the causes that have led to the present advanced standard of wages in this country over the standard of other countries and of the advanced condition of labor in the present over that of the past century.

That we may the more carefully think out this problem let us commence our investigations, starting with some accepted fact and proceed along historic and scientific lines, necessarily on account of space, narrowing inquiry to within easy limits of time and space.

FIRST—It is an acknowledged fact that the great masses of mankind are poor.

SECOND—That in civilized countries the great masses of mankind perform useful, productive, and distributive service.

THIRD—That the method of payment for the services of the majority of workers is called the wages system.

FOURTH—That the amount of the wages paid is not in proportion to the quantity or quality of the services rendered.

FIFTH—That great differences exist in the amount paid for services of equal amount and value even in the same occupation.

SIXTH—That the amount paid for services is not according to skill, or training, or time expended.

SEVENTH—That those who work at the most disagreeable and hazardous employments are not paid in proportion to disagreeableness or hazard, but are paid less than those in the most pleasant and healthful vocations.

EIGHTH—That those who work upon the most useful, beneficial and

necessary products, do not receive as much as those employed in the production of wasteful, destructive and demoralizing things.

NINTH—Those who work under the long-hour system get much less than those who work under the short-hour system.

These statements can not be contradicted, and equally strong facts could be brought forward that would point with equal clearness to the remedy.

We must keep to the point and agree to a certain definition of words as used in this primer.

By wages we mean the amount received by employes (not salaried persons) for their labor.

By the wages system we mean that method by which money is distributed or paid to the wage-worker, not the money distributed by the wage-worker.

Before we can answer the great question "How can we get what we want, that is, more wages?" we must find the answer to the question, "Why does a man for the same skill and amount of service in any given occupation receive more in one place than in another?" or to put the same question in a form that answers itself, "Why does a wage-worker receive more where the cost or standard of living is high than he does in a place where the cost or standard is low?"

Answer—"Because in one place the cost or standard is high and in the other it is low."

This is the great law. The standard of living affects wages.

It is true that in some places and at times wages are advanced beyond the standard of living, but such an advance is necessarily brief in duration, and proves the rule by wages soon falling to the standard of life, but if the standard of life reaches to the level of wages the wages remain fixed.

Question—What affects the standard of life?

Answer—As a rule, in all countries and in all times the demand for higher or more wages is consequent upon the increased pressure upwards of new wants created.

If a man has learned to read and is surrounded by reading men he will want to read, and will demand such wages as will enable him to satisfy this want.

If there was no such day as the Sabbath or rest day and all wage-workers were employed the seven days of the week, not only would wages not be advanced but they would be reduced, because the present wants of Sunday would be lost.

The six-day system of labor furnishes not only the seven days' food, but it creates wants that permeate all the days of the year through the associations of that day. Wages come to the level of Sunday leisure and Sunday clothing.

Every infringement of the great labor rest day lowers the standard of dress of the community, for where many do not dress better on that day than on other days of the week many more will fall into the same

habit, and habits of poor dress bring other low habits, *the Sabbath is a reduction of the hours of labor*, and like every other reduction of working time increases wages through the leveling up process of leisure.

A reduction of two hours from the ten-hour system will increase wages through the same influences, for two hours from work will mean two hours of association at the home or in social enjoyments that ultimately lift the standard of thought and standard of living. It may be said that with truth :

Hovel life gives hovel wages ;

Tenement house life gives tenement house wages ;

Shabby clothes give shabby wages ;

Good clothes, good eating, good homes, mean good wages ;

You can not have the best till you want the best.

Men content with working ten hours a day at manual labor will be content with low wages, because the excess of time devoted to labor will unfit them for the associations and inspirations that create new wants.

In those occupations where the most hours per day are required, the wages of the men are so low that the wife, mother, and child are forced to work to supply the necessities of life ; such laborers are at the mercy of their employers, the most difficult to organize ; read the history of the factory operatives and you will see that it was not till after the adoption of the ten-hour system that they could successfully organize.

Having now discovered that wages follow the line of the increased, improved, and varied wants of a people, we reach the important question, "What practical measure can be applied to the existing wage system that will the most readily and permanently advance wages?"

To answer this we must question the past :

Question—Have the hours of labor been reduced during the past century ?

Answer—Yes.

Question—How much have they been reduced ?

Answer—From sixteen to ten, and in some occupations from sixteen to eight.

Question—Have wages been reduced with these successive reductions of working time ?

Answer—No.

Question—Have wages been increased ?

Answer—Yes ; and as a rule wages have increased most where the hours have been lessened most.

Question—Was there ever time or place, where the hours of labor were generally or permanently reduced, where wages were not increased ?

Answer—No ; each permanent reduction has been followed by a permanent increase of wages.

Question—Has the purchasing power of a day's work been increased during these years of the reduction of the working hours ?

Answer—Yes: and if the hours of labor had been generally reduced to eight twenty years ago, the industrial stagnations or so-called panics would have been averted.

Question—Has the moral, intellectual, and physical condition of the people been improved where the hours of labor have been reduced?

Answer—Yes. It has proved true in this as in other matters, that “opportunities given have been opportunities improved,” and but for the rapid increase of cheap laborers by immigration wages would have more rapidly advanced.

This then is the practical method by which wages can be increased: by creating new wants and aspirations, reducing profits upon labor, lessening the price of commodities, and finally transforming the wage system through higher wages.

This then is the practical measure, because all trade unions and labor societies are agreed upon this measure, and because it can be adopted without seriously imperiling capital invested in legitimate enterprise, and because a general reduction of the hours of labor will furnish employment for the unemployed.

THE ARGUMENT.

It is cheap labor more than any other fact that most endangers our institutions; the mistake of the wealthy is that they consider their direct interest in the cheap labor they hire, and not their direct interest in the dearer laborer who buys what they wish to sell.

The number of laborers who can buy must be large, or many of those who produce to sell will have nothing to do. Buyers are as important as sellers, and those who buy are those who have something to pay.

Causes that penetrate deep down into the foundation upon which rest institutions, governments, religion, and various national peculiarities, must be established, or perhaps rather be permitted to act from their natural impulse, if we are to permanently improve the wage-system.

The most of mankind think they must have whatever they have been in the habit of having; there is more resistance in this fact than in any other short of absolute natural necessities. The fact that men must eat or starve, can not be changed at all. The fact that they must eat certain things in certain ways, or at particular times, can be changed, but only very gradually.

James Hole says: “Inferior habits of living are as much a cause as they are a result of low wages.”

John Stuart Mill says: “No remedies for low wages have the smallest chance of being efficacious, which do not operate on and through the minds and habits of the people.”

McCulloch, in his political economy, says: “That the lowering of the opinions of the laboring class with respect to the mode in which they should live is perhaps the most serious of all evils that can befall them

Let them once become contented with a lower species of food and an inferior standard of comfort, and they may bid a long adieu to anything better."

Amasa Walker, in his *Science of Wealth*, says: "That the standard of wages varies according to the expenses of subsistence in different countries, and the condition in which the laboring classes are willing to live."

Mr. Brassy, who had world-wide experience in railroad building, said: "That if the superior quality of the workmen does not fully make up in product the difference of wages, this high price of labor stimulates invention of labor-saving machinery."

Ira Stewart said: "Machinery is discharging laborers faster than new employments are provided. Machinery must not be stopped and tramps must not be increased," and he held that the only remedy for these evils was a reduction of the hours of labor.

In the census year of 1885, the Bureau of Statistics of Labor of Massachusetts collected the number of employed and unemployed persons, men, women, and children, and the duration of their unemployment in their usual vocations.

The following table, prepared from these returns, gives the number of months, number of persons, number of days, and number of hours of the unemployed :

	No. of Persons.	Days.	Hours.
One month.....	19,578	499,239	4,992,390
Two months.....	47,775	2,436,525	24,365,250
Three months.....	41,877	3,203,590	32,035,900
Four months.....	47,424	4,837,248	48,372,480
Five months.....	16,247	2,071,492	20,714,920
Six months.....	42,813	6,550,389	65,503,890
Seven months.....	6,138	1,095,633	10,956,330
Eight months.....	7,166	1,461,864	14,618,640
Nine months.....	5,320	1,220,940	12,209,400
Ten months.....	4,153	1,059,015	10,590,150
Eleven months.....	2,276	638,418	6,384,180
Twelve months.....	822	251,532	2,515,320

making a total of 241,589 persons who were unemployed 25,325,885 days, or 253,258,850 hours at 10 hours per day.

The persons fully employed numbered 574,881, estimating that full time means 10 hours per day for 306 days in the year; these persons worked 1,759,135,860 hours, and the partially employed worked 486,008,490 hours, making a total of 2,245,144,350 hours worked by the whole number employed and unemployed. At eight hours per day this would have been 280,643,043 days worked, against 244,514,435 days' work under the ten hours system, or full employment at eight hours per day for 917,134 persons.

The whole number employed and unemployed during the census year

was 816,470 persons. Under the eight-hour distribution they could have had full work for the year, and then there would have been work for 100,664 more persons.

The employment of the extra number of persons at \$1.00 per day would have added to the circulation \$100,664 per day or \$30,803,184 in the year, and as the 241,589 persons lost 253,358,850 hours' work under the ten-hour system, they would have received under the eight-hour system full employment, and would have thus added to the circulation the sum of \$25,335,850 to their earnings, making a grand total of extra earnings of \$55,132,231 for the year. If any one wishes to claim that the full employment of 100,664 more persons in this state more than the total number that were employed and partly employed for that year would not tend to increase wages, then he must base his claim on a theory contrary to all fact.

It is not claimed that with the present facilities of production a man can produce as much in eight hours as he can in ten hours. We claim that the reduction of the hours of labor will increase the demand for laborers. If the wages are reduced as a consequence of the reduction of hours, then certainly the cost of production would not be increased in proportion to the reduced time, but only in proportion to the enhanced cost of the new plant necessary to the employment of the increased number of persons.

The product of one hour in eight would not be less than one hour in ten. The introduction of new machinery necessary for the increased number of workers would call again for other and more workers because of the increased demand for new machinery.

All of these persons thus brought into employment would be as the discovery of a new market of 100,000 new consumers demanding increased production. All will admit that lessening the number of unemployed will give the employed the opportunity to demand more wages with eminent prospect of success. The elements of cost in any enterprise are the price of raw material, cost of labor, rate of interest and taxes, and the price of placing the goods on the market.

The price of the product is governed largely by the quantity that it is possible to produce in a given time. The larger the demand the larger will be the means of supply; the demand determines the amount produced, the market determines the demand, and the condition of the people determines the market. High wages under short hours means that a larger share of the products are being distributed among the producers. The inevitable tendency is in the direction of reduced profits to capital, and the hope of the future rests upon these two facts, that profit upon capital is being diminished and the wages of labor is being increased.

It is said that if profits are reduced, capital will not seek investment, and hence enterprise will be checked. Capital is soon consumed when not recuperated by interest or profit; it always accepts such percentage as it is permitted to have, and the insecurity of

capital when invested in speculative and gambling enterprises will tend to force the conservative possessor to seek safe investments, however small the interest.

In 1872 the Boston Eight-Hour League said: "That reducing the hours increases the purchasing power of wages, as well as the amount of wealth produced; that dear men mean cheap production; that 6 cents in China is dearest, and \$3 a day in America is cheapest; that the moral causes that have made \$3 a day cheaper than 6 cents a day will make higher wages still cheaper; that less hours mean reducing the profits and fortunes that are made on labor or its results."

"More knowledge and more capital for labor, the wage system gradually disappearing through higher wages, more idlers working and more workers thinking, and the salvation of republican institutions."

The working or wage classes, as a rule, are not paid for doing ten hours' work.

They are not paid as much as they would and do earn in eight hours' labor per day; and the difference between what they actually earn or produce, and what they receive as wages, is increasing nearly as fast as the invention of labor-saving machinery.

In some cases men are now earning, in three or four hours' labor per day, all that they receive for their full day's pay; and the results of the remaining six or seven hours' work are clear profit to the one or several parties standing between them and the mass of the consumers who are mostly wage producers.

Now those who want as much labor for as little pay as possible, and whose wealth is increased in proportion to the profits made upon labor or its results, are of course satisfied with things as they are; and they naturally resist all efforts either to make wages equal to the amount of work done or to reduce the number of hours' work to the level of wages paid.

An investigation of the natural laws that govern wages will prove that all attempts to bring them up to a ten-hour-a-day standard must necessarily prove, as it always has, an utter impossibility—that low pay is the inevitable result of long hours; that to increase the hours of labor would reduce still lower the rate of wages; that, as a rule, those who work the hardest always get the least, besides not being respected or thanked.

If the number of hours worked, or the amount accomplished, governed the price of labor, goods could never be manufactured much cheaper in one country than another.

The cheap labor of the Old World does not mean that the laboring classes there work only a few hours a day. Many of them are toiling twelve and fourteen hours, for a mere fraction of the rates paid to American industry.

Nor are the wages paid for piece or job work governed by any different principle from that which governs the price of day labor, as a comparison between the amount paid for weaving a yard of cloth or

setting type in Boston, San Francisco, London, Berlin, Constantinople or Pekin would demonstrate.

In all countries wages are governed by the cost or standard of living ; and in those countries where the people are the most intelligent, the wages and cost of living are the highest.

The great obstacle that hinders a reduction of the hours of labor, is the fear of the working classes themselves, that if their hours are reduced, their wages will be reduced also ; and this fear is worked upon by those who want to profit upon the labor of the masses as long as possible.

Organized labor has asked for such legislation as will most help to dissipate this fallacy. The public can afford examples enough to prove that eight hours can not result in a reduction of wages. Neither Government nor individuals can ever secure labor at eight hours a day, without giving what is called ten hours' pay—that is, the prevailing rates.

In the eight-hour system employers must pay what they term ten-hour rates to secure eight hours' work. On no other conditions can help be retained.

In the twelve or fifteen hours' system men would be obliged to work the regular hours to secure the usual rates.

But if the six or five-hour system were adopted by any single employer where the hours worked were twelve or fifteen, he would nevertheless be forced to pay what would be called twelve or fifteen-hour rates.

The justice of demanding as much for eight as for ten hours' labor consists in the fact that the masses are earning enough more than their wages to give a few individuals and the various manufacturing, railroads, commercial and banking enterprises hundreds of millions of dollars ; and it is safe to claim that 20 per cent less time for labor would not result in more than ten or fifteen per cent less productions.

It is urged that if wages can not be reduced directly, the cost of productions will be increased, and that as laborers are consumers, the increased price of commodities will be practically and indirectly a reduction of wages. But whatever increases the cost of living must necessarily increase wages. Whatever else happens the masses must live. Nothing short of a revolution can suddenly change their habits and ways of living. It is easier to increase or reduce the hours of labor, or to increase or reduce the profits of capital, than to suddenly change the established modes of living for the masses. It would be as easy to change their religion, or their form of Government or possibly their language, as their habits and customs ; habit is second nature, and wages are based on habits.

The employing classes do not oppose this movement because wages will be reduced, but because they know that wages can not be reduced. They are tolerably sure that as much work can not be done in the eight hours' time, and they believe that their profits will be diminished ac-

cordingly. Whether one can do as much in eight as in ten hours' labor is not an important question. It is undoubtedly true that with certain self-acting machinery, ten hours are more profitable than eight; and that every labor-saving invention is an additional argument for long hours, if this fact is to decide the question. The more perfect the invention of machinery, the more profitable ten or eleven, or twelve, or even fifteen hours will be over eight.

The day will never come when one can do as much in a day of eight hours as he might the day before or after in ten hours' labor; but the time will come, if it has not already, when such a consideration will have no weight in determining whether more leisure and better opportunities for the working classes shall prevail. If this question must turn on the power of labor to accomplish as much in eight as in ten hours with automatic machinery, then, of course, the hours of labor will never be reduced; and to say that one can not do as much in the proposed reduction, as a reason why it should not be made, is to say that the ten-hour system must last forever. And the progress of labor-saving machinery will mean, finally, additional hours to the laborer's toil, as the manufacturers will demonstrate the fact that more can be accomplished in eleven, or twelve, or even thirteen hours a day.

This is the argument that prevails with those who now insist upon the long hours system, for the comparatively perfect machinery of cotton or woolen mills.

Whether as much can be done in the long-hour system, concerns the question of the production of wealth. Whether the laborer can obtain as much, in the proposed eight-hour rule, as he now receives, concerns the distribution of wealth. The question of distribution is of more immediate importance than that of production, as it means less poverty for the masses; and the measure here proposed is preliminary to this idea. Less hours means less poverty. And the first and indispensable step toward this is to prove the utter impossibility of reducing wages by merely reducing the hours of labor to eight per day. To establish this prepares the way for the next great truth—that a general adoption of the system will increase wages, reduce the profits on labor, cheapen production, increase the intelligence of the worker, and so gradually provide him with the capital and knowledge necessary to co-operate.

PRIMER LESSONS REVIEWED.

Questioner—What do the facts of history, experience, and observation show as the great underlying motive of men?

Answer—To possess more and better things and opportunities.

Questioner—What has been the historical method of obtaining more?

Answer—By the congregation, association, and organization of men of like and similar interests.

Questioner—What method or measure has proved the most success-

ful to the wage-workers in their efforts to secure more of what they produced ?

Answer—The measure or method that would at that time act upon the habits and customs of the people so that they first wanted more, then demanded more, and by the upward pressure of moral and material forces obtained more.

Questioner—By what system do the masses of mankind in civilized or semi-civilized countries obtain the little wealth they now have ?

Answer—By and through the wage system.

Questioner—What is the great natural law that governs wages ?

Answer—The habits and customs or standard of living of the people.

Questioner—What one thing more than another so acts upon the habits of a people at this time and in all countries where industry is highly organized, as to improve the standard of living ?

Answer—Leisure is the strongest force to create new wants and aspirations and thus improve habits and customs.

Questioner—What is the most valuable thing that a man has to sell ?

Answer—Time.

Questioner—Who is the richer, the man who sells the most of his time for a small sum, or the man who sells the smallest portion for the largest price ?

Answer—Time is money, and the man who expends his time or money without a full equivalent will soon be bankrupt.

Questioner—If a man working under the twelve-hour system occasionally works four hours extra, what does he receive for the extra time ?

Answer—He receives one-third of a day's pay extra.

Questioner—If a man working under the eight-hour system occasionally works four hours extra, how much would he receive ?

Answer—He would receive pay for a half day's time extra.

Questioner—If the wage-worker under the eight-hour system should make it a rule to work two or four hours extra, what would be the result ?

Answer—The eight-hour system would soon disappear, and they would soon have but one day's pay for the full number of hours worked, whether it was ten or twelve hours per day.

Questioner—How can the working class get eight hours and high wages ?

Answer—By increasing the number of the members of the Trade Unions, and having them co-operate with the American Federation of Labor, so that all would work towards the one end.

Questioner—What will you do to be saved from the danger of servitude, for the benefit of your wife and children, and for the preservation of the free institutions of this Republic ?

Answer—I will work for the reduction of the hours of labor to eight hours per day.

